has borne poverty with dignity, with such indifference".[43] He Is "simply a very lonely, a very cultivated and a very honest man".[5]"

Life for them would be a meaningful experience, because she is "remarkably fresh", and he is "remarkably well-seasoned". A certain ardour takes possession of Isabel - a sense of the earnestness of Osmond's love and a delight in his personal qualities; and-she marries him. He has "all the appearance of a man living in the open air of the world, indifferent to small considerations, caring only for truth and knowledge"/[1] and it is for this quality that Isabel admires Osmond most. Three years of married life open her eyes to his real nature. Behind the mask of aestheticism, taste, and suave manners is a nature, egoistical, acquisitive, cynical and diabolic. Isabel is not mistaken about the beauty of his mind, but is shocked to discover the use to which it was being put, The things about which he appeared to be indifferent are the very things which he craved most to possess. Isabel discovers that "under all his culture, his cleverness, his amity, under his good nature, his facility, his knowledge of life, his egotism lay hidden like a serpent in a bank of flowers".[58] Isabel Is so fasci-nated by .the beautiful flowers that she is oblivious of the serpent lurking in the luxurious undergrowths of the bank.

Osmond hates Isabel, because her attitude to life is the very antithesis of his own. He is furious that he has not been able to tame her mind to suit his needs and purposes. His pose of aestheticism, goodness, and indifference is assumed for an acquisitive exploitation of the world. He marries Isabel for her money, in ordar that his illegitimate daughter. Pansy, could marry well. James seems to say that aestheticism and manners are dangerous instruments of evil, if they are not allied with a basic moral soundness. A fine mind, engaging manners, and cultivated tastes are the baits with which the shrewd Osmond ensnares the innocent Isabef, who mistakes the glitter for the substance and is deceived into a loveless and fruitless marri-

age. Beneath Osmond's pose of refinement is the sordidness of an adulterous union with Madame Merle, and his air of indifference to normal human desires is a fiction. The impact of evil, and the consequent refinement of Isabel's consciousness, are experiences which she would cherish greatly as they have helped her moral growth. Like Emerson and Thoreau, James also believed that evil lies in preferring the world's values to one's own; and Isabel, in rejecting the world's values, keeps the integrity of her character inviolate. The knowledge of evif Is acquired through suffering, which is the fire that refines the